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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 DHA-05 /062 W
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R 060330Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4305
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, AF, PK
SUBJ: PUSHTUNISTAN DAY - 1977

1. SUMMARY: THIS YEAR'S PUSHTUNISTAN DAY CELEBRATION OF AFGHAN SUPPORT FOR THE RIGHTS OF ITS PUSHTUN AND BALUCHI "BROTHERS" LIVING IN PAKISTAN WAS ALMOST A CARBON COPY OF THE 1976 VERSION. THE SPEECHES CONTAINED THE RIGHT NOISES REGARDING PUSHTUNISTAN, BUT THEY WERE TEMPERED TO REFLECT THE CONTINUED AFGHAN INTEREST IN CONTINUING THE RAPPROCHEMENT WITH PAKISTAN WHICH WAS BEGUN PRIOR TO LAST YEAR'S HOLIDAY. ONE SPEAKER LAUNCHED A POINTED BARB AT FORMER PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO, BUT, IN GENERAL, THE CELEBRATION WAS A FAIRLY HO-HUM AFFAIR WHICH PROVOKED LITTLE VISIBLE PASSION ON THE PART OF THE AFGHAN COMMON CITIZEN. END SUMMARY.

2. PUSHTUNISTAN DAY IS AN AFGHAN NATIONAL HOLIDAY CELEBRATED AUGUST 31. IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT PAST, IT WAS USED AS AN OCCASION FOR THE AFGHANS TO TRUMPET THE CULTURAL AND ETHNIC TIES WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THEM AND THEIR "PUSHTUN AND BALUCH BRETHREN" ON THE OTHER SIDE
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OF THE PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN BORDER. IN THE WAKE OF THE ADVENT OF IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, HOWEVER, LAST YEAR'S PUSHTUNISTAN FESTIVITIES, AND THIS YEAR'S, WERE TONED DOWN CONSIDERABLY IN ORDER NOT TO UPSET THE RAPPROCHEMENT APPLECART, NOR TO COMPLICATE BILATERAL RELATIONS ON THE EVE (PERHAPS) OF THE ELECTIONS IN PAKISTAN.

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3. THE ATMOSPHERICS SURROUNDING PUSHTUNISTAN DAY 1977
WERE VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL WITH THOSE OF A YEAR AGO.
THE RAISING OF THE PUSHTUNISTAN FLAG OVER PUSHTUNISTAN
SQUARE AT 8:00 A.M. AMIDST FLAG-WAVING CROWDS KICKED
OFF THE CELEBRATIONS. PICTURES OF PRESIDENT DAOUD WERE
ALSO OMNI-PRESENT, BUT, IN CONTRAST TO LAST YEAR,
THERE WERE NO RUMORS THAT THE AFGHAN LEADER HIMSELF WAS
TAKING PART IN THE CEREMONIES. DR. GHULAM SAKHI NOORZAD,
MAYOR OF KABUL, GAVE THE OPENING REMARKS IN WHICH HE
REPEATED THE STANDARD LINE THAT THE "SOLE POLITICAL
DISPUTE" BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN IS THE
"INALIENABLE RIGHTS" OF THE PUSHTUN AND
BALUCHI PEOPLES.

4. NOORZAD WAS FOLLOWED TO THE MICROPHONE BY AJMAL
KHATTAK, EXILED FORMER SECRETARY OF PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL
AWAMI PARTY, WHOSE COMMENTS WERE ALSO RELATIVELY MUTED,
BUT WHO LET OUT THE STOPS SOMEWHAT WHEN HE CLAIMED
THAT THE STRUGGLES OF THE PUSHTUN-BALUCHI
BRETHREN HAD CONTRIBUTED TO THE FALL OF THE "ONE-MAN
DICTATORIAL GOVERNMENT" IN PAKISTAN. KHATTAK ALSO
DIRECTED A FEW GARLANDS AT BEGUM WALI KHAN AND MUFTI
MAHMOUD, WHO ARE OSTENSIBLY CARRYING FORWARD THE STRUGGLE
FOR PUSHTUN AND BALUCHI RIGHTS IN PUSHTUNISTAN.

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5. OTHER CELEBRITIES SHARING THE DAIS WITH NOORZAD
AND KHATTAK WERE MOHAMMAD NAIM, DAOUD'S BROTHER AND
PRINCIPAL POLITICAL ADVISOR (FOR SOME REASON, NAIM
DEPARTED THE SCENE BEFORE KHATTAK HAD COMPLETED HIS
EXHORTATION), MEMBERS OF THE CABINET, AND A NUMBER OF
SENIOR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS.

6. COMMENT. KHATTAK'S REFERENCE TO THE DEPOSED
BHUTTO, WHICH WAS UNDOUBTEDLY CLEARED BY AFGHAN AUTHORITIES,
TENDS TO UNDERSCORE WHAT WE BELIEVE HAS BEEN THE RECENT
AFGHAN ASSESSMENT THAT BHUTTO'S POLITICAL FUTURE IS
CLOUDED AT BEST, AND THAT HE WILL NOT LIKELY BE A MAJOR
FIGURE WITH WHOM THE AFGHANS WILL HAVE TO DEAL ON MATTERS
OF BILATERAL CONCERN. THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE COMMON MAN
PARTICIPATING IN THE PUSHTUNISTAN FESTIVITIES APPEARED
RESTRAINED, AND A WALK BY AN EMBOFF THROUGH THE KABUL
BAZAAR FOLLOWING THE SPEECHES AND MARCHES LEFT THE
IMPRESSION THAT THE MAN ON THE STREET WAS MUCH MORE
INTERESTED IN CONDUCTING HIS DAILY BUSINESS THAN HE WAS
IN FURTHERING THE "LEGAL RIGHTS" OF HIS
PUSHTUN AND BALUCHI BROTHERS.
AMSTUTZ

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